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# Cambodia put on front burner

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The USA's battle against the Vietnam-backed Cambodian regime heats up today on two fronts:

■ Secretary of State George Shultz visits a refugee camp near the Thai-Cambodian border packed with Cambodians who fled to Thailand during last winter's offensive.

■ Congress begins debate on a foreign-aid bill providing for \$5 million in aid to non-communist elements of the Cambodian coalition still fighting from bases in Thailand.

Shultz, in the Thai capital of Bangkok on the second stop of a 13-day Asian tour, zeroed in Monday on fears about the impact of Vietnamese power in Cambodia — but stopped short of a commitment to military support for the rebels.

First, he signed an agreement providing \$3 million in aid for Thai villages hit by the fighting along the border between Vietnamese troops and Cambodian rebels. At the signing, he described the presence of about 180,000 Vietnamese troops backing up the Phnom Penh government as "arrogant and illegal."

Then he met with leaders of the two non-communist ele-

ments in the coalition — the Khmer People's National Liberation Front and the Sihanoukists, followers of former Prince Norodom Sihanouk.

In Washington, the House this afternoon begins considering the entire foreign aid package. The bill includes a provision drawn up by Rep. Stephen Solarz, D-N.Y., chairman of the Asian affairs subcommittee, for the U.S. to channel \$5 million to non-communist Cambodian rebels through the Thai government.

The White House, however, prefers another version, already passed by the Senate, that would authorize the ad-

ministration to give aid directly to the rebels.

Either way, U.S. officials denied Monday that any of the aid would go to the communist Khmer Rouge faction, responsible for killing between 1 million and 3 million Cambodians before Vietnamese troops drove it out of Phnom Penh in early 1979.

Officials refused to comment on a Washington Post report that the CIA already aids the non-communist rebels. U.S. aid for Cambodians now goes through the United Nations Border Relief Operation and the Red Cross — and totals only \$8 million this year.